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R-189-55 OARMA Norway

SOCIAL RELATIONS WITH SOVIET OFFICIALS (U)

1. Colonel Spann and Colonel Humphrey called on Colonel FURSOV and Captain IROSHNIKOV at the latter's home today on an official call incident to the arrival of Colonel Spann and the departure of Colonel Humphrey.

2. I made arrangements for the call on Friday July 8 by telephone with Captain IVANOV, Assistant Naval Attache. We spoke in English and it was my understanding at the end of the telephone call that Captain IVANOV understood that both the Soviet Naval and Military Attaches and all their Assistants would be present for the visit; at least those who were not otherwise occupied. In the event only Colonel FURSOV and Captain IROSHNIKOV were present.

3. Captain IROSHNIKOV lives at Frederik Stangs Gate 12, a private house, very close to the Soviet Embassy. IROSHNIKOV said that he and his chauffeur have the first floor of the house. He indicated that someone else had the second floor but did not say who lived there.

4. Both Soviet officers were extremely affable, served us Russian cigarettes and a 3/8 liter bottle of a chilled sweet wine very similar to Dubonnet. There was nothing ostentatious about it and much more suitable to the occasion than the conglomeration of vodka, wines, caviar, sausage and other tidbits which have been the feature of previous official calls on the Soviet Attaches.

5. Captain IROSHNIKOV said he hoped some day to see my wife and me in Moscow, underlining that free travel to the Soviet Union is now in order.

6. IROSHNIKOV, who did most of the talking since it is apparent that Col. FURSOV's command of English is greatly inferior to that of IROSHNIKOV, said that his Embassy had recently attempted to rent a flat for Commander TCHOBOTOV. The flat has 8 rooms and is suitable for 2 families and costs 900 kroner a month (approximately \$127.00) which both he and Colonel FURSOV thought was high. (Actually for an apartment of this size the rent is considerably below normal asking prices in Oslo). I asked Col. FURSOV where the apartment was but he evaded answering and I did not press the point. This lead to a discussion of monies available to various diplomats here and both Soviet officers explained that they had no means of obtaining dollars, could not exchange or otherwise use rubles and had to use here the kroner which are obtained through normal Soviet-Norwegian trade agreement activities.

7. Both Soviet officers said that it is very difficult to obtain officer Attache personnel for filling Attache posts abroad. The Soviet officers do not desire such posts, preferring service in Russia. IROSHNIKOV pointed out that Col. TARASOV had returned to Russia a year ago and that it had taken all that time to find his replacement, Colonel FURSOV. Captain IROSHNIKOV said the normal tour for Naval officers in the Attache System is 4 years and that he hopes to be returned to Russia about 6 months from now. Col. FURSOV said the normal tour of duty for Army officers is not fixed but is 3 or 4 years.

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8. In the conversation the subject of the railroad placed on the ice of Lake Ladoga was mentioned and in reply to questioning Capt. IROSHNIKOV said the ice in winter is 3 meters thick, that the average temperature is about -20° Centigrade and rarely gets colder than -35° Centigrade.

9. Both Soviet officers were most pleasantly friendly. Both welcomed Col. Sparr and wished him good luck in his new assignment. Both regretted the departure of Col. Humphrey and repeatedly wished him good luck and fortune in his new assignment and sent the warm regards of themselves and wives to Mrs. Humphrey.

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